Unsearchable Greatness of The Salvation

BAKHT SINGH

CONTENTS

1. The Greatness of the Saviour [illegible]
2. The Greatness of our [illegible]
3. The Greatness of [illegible]
4. Great Privilege [illegible]
5. A Great High Priest 14
6. A Sure Anchor 17
7. God's Great Desire 19
8. A Greater Tabernacle 22
9. Preparation for a Great Inheritance 26
10. Great Boldness in God's Presence 34
11. Men of Great Faith 35
12. Great Need for Godliness 40
13. Great Promises 42

INTRODUCTION

Man is a sinner by birth. King David says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51: 5). This is true of every human being. That is why the thoughts, words and deeds of man are always sinful. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). As God is holy and righteous, His righteousness demands, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). This is not the death of the body but it is the second death which is eternal separation from the loving Creator, and torment in the hell fire. But God as a loving Father did not want mankind to go to the second death. He wanted to save them from the second death. He came down to this earth in the form of Lord Jesus Christ to take upon Himself the punishment due to the sins of the whole mankind, past, present and future. He lived a sinless life upon this earth and laid down His life on the Cross of Calvary as a ransom for the sins of the people. He died and was buried. On the third day he rose again from the grave, conquering death. Now He is alive to, forgive the sins of those who go to Him humbly and confess their sins to Him, and to save them from the terrible consequences of sin, namely the eternal separation from the living God. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10). The salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ offers to all those who believe on Him is not merely deliverance from the second death, but much more along with it. Because when God gives, He gives abundantly. We can get some glimpses of this great salvation by studying the epistle of Hebrews.

CHAPTER I

The Greatness of the Saviour

In chapter one, the apostle speaks of the greatness of the One through whom this great salvation is obtained. God is so great and yet He Himself brings us this great salvation. He is not only our Saviour, but also our Creator : "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (v. 2). He is our Creator and the whole universe belongs to Him. He is the Creator of all that we see upon the earth. Also we see in Col. 1:16,17, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him : And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." The same thought is repeated in different parts of the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit confirms one truth by repeating it many times. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord" (Rev.1:8). He is the Creator, and also all things were created for Him. He is the Beginning and the Ending. Also we are told that all things were created by Him by one word. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psa. 33:6). He said one word and it was so. From nothing all these things came into existence. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3). For example we read in Gen.

[illegible] and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his [illegible] seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so" [illegible] sowing, and watering all [illegible] power with [illegible]

[illegible] we look [illegible] different places. [illegible] Christ, the [illegible]

[illegible] them and to make [illegible] He is the brightness of God's glory, the [illegible] person (Heb. 1:3). "In him dwelleth [illegible] Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). He is greater than all the angels, "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more [illegible] than they" (Heb. 1:4). The angels are [illegible] and many in number. The Lord Jesus Christ is far higher and greater than all of them and they are in subjection to Him - "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word" (Psa. 103:20)

and the great salvation. If we have any valuable article with us, we keep it very safely and look at it

Lord Jesus comes that
receive immortal bodies and the Lord will
angels to serve us. When the work is
able to go to any part of the heavenly kingdom and command the angels to serve us.

That position is not given to angels even though they are mighty and are in God's presence always. They are constantly hearing His voice and are doing His pleasure. Such angels are our ministering spirits. What a great salvation! What a great honour! What a great privilege! What a great love and what a great grace!

God has made every provision to teach us about His great love through His wonderful Book, the Bible, and through His servants. The Lord says in Matt. 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." With great love the Lord Jesus Christ has given us this Book to make us perfect (2 Tim. 3:16-17). That is why we should spend sufficient time upon our knees studying His word to know more and more of Him and the great salvation- "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). The believers at Berea searched the Scriptures and went deep into God's Word to know more about God and His truths. We should use all the books of the Bible to know more about these things. Even though the Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught the two disciples, in the incident recorded in Luke 24:13-35, at that time they could not understand. Only when He opened their eyes of understanding they knew Him and understood His suffering, death and resurrection. Our spiritual eyes must be opened more and more to see His beauty. Therefore we have to pray constantly: "Oh Lord, open my eyes of understanding to know more about Thee and Thy truths" in relation to Matt. 13:16, 17. But that requires faith, humility and diligence. So we see what a great Saviour we have!

CHAPTER II

The Greatness of our Calling : New Creation

In the second chapter, the apostle writes about the Lord's lofty purpose in saving us and the high calling with which He called us. If we do not take heed, we are compared to a leaking vessel. Sometimes there is a small crack in a mud vessel. It is so small one cannot see it, but the contents in the vessel gradually leak and disappear. If we are not careful and diligent about our salvation, we will suffer great loss. The Lord had to empty Himself to be our Saviour and had to leave His throne and His glory and be born in a manger. He became poor for our sake and gave His whole body to be broken and blood to be shed for us. The power which He manifested to be our Saviour is far greater than the power manifested to create, uphold and destroy the whole creation. That is why even one believer is much more precious in His eyes than the whole universe.

A believer, however poor and weak he is, will live for eternity with an immortal body. In the Bible, believers are called God's peculiar treasure, the pearl of great price, God's co-workers, and God's partners. These names are not given to the heavens. God will not call the heavens His peculiar treasure, His portion, His partner or His inheritance. Even the angels are not called by these names, "For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure" (Psa. 135:4). The name Jacob means deceiver. Israel means prince. As sinners we have Jacob's nature; but by coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, we are trans-

formed and become Israel, and God's everlasting peculiar treasure. Thus we see clearly that our Lord has a great purpose in saving us, because He has paid all that He had to save us. Even though we were like filthy rags because of sin, yet our Lord made us His peculiar treasure.

The apostle speaks of the world to come or the New Creation in Hebrews 2:5. That New Creation will show forth God's glory for eternity. In that New Creation there is no more death, neither pain nor tears (Rev. 21:3-5). It will be free from the curse of sin and will last forever. We are told that this New Creation will not be governed by the angels (Heb. 2:5), even though they are mighty angels, always doing God's will and pleasure. But it will be governed by those who are sought and saved by the Lord Jesus Christ. In Psalm 103:20 it says that the angels excel in strength, do His commandments and constantly hear God's voice. They do not rebel or disobey. They are mighty and shining (Luke 24:4), and are many in number (Rev. 5:11) and yet the Scripture says, the coming New Creation filled with God's glory, will not be governed by the angels. In chapter one of Hebrews we have seen that the angels will be made our ministering spirits. Imagine the day when the Lord Jesus Christ will gather all the angels to tell something of the glory in the coming New Creation. When they are told of the glory of the coming Creation they will be filled with wonder. After telling the angels about the glory of the coming New Creation, the Lord will also reveal to them that it will not be governed by them, but by man who is sought and saved by His grace. According to Jude verse 24, one day we shall be presented faultless before God. Then we shall be more glorious than even the angels. The Lord emptied Himself

and purchased us with His precious blood to give us such a high calling and position.

If the Lord had desired, He could have come into the world like an angel. But for a special purpose He became like one of us (Heb. 2:16, 17). For forty days He allowed Satan to bring before Him all temptations which can possibly come to any human being (Luke 4:1, 2). For our sake He conquered all those temptations. So He knows exactly what kind of temptation we are facing. Whenever we have any weakness or temptation, the Lord helps us to overcome. We are being transformed day by day into His likeness by His grace, love and precious blood. And one day we shall see Him, and be like Him and be partakers of His glory and beauty. With that glory, we shall govern the New Creation. Now our earthly trials, temptations and afflictions prepare us for the New Creation. What a high purpose our Lord has in saving us even though we are so foolish! There are some wealthy parents who have high purposes for their children. They want them to occupy high positions in life; but if you ask his small child what he wants to be when he is grown up, he says that he wants to become a policeman! If you ask him the reason, he will say, "I can stop all the traffic." As children they cannot understand their father's great purpose for their lives. We also sometimes cannot understand our Heavenly Father's great purpose for our lives. Many believers live as beggars upon the earth and live a life of defeat and shame, because they cannot understand God's great purpose in saving them. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" What a great loss we incur if we are careless and negligent about our salvation! We have to be watchful, prayerful, diligent and careful.

formed and become Israel, and God's everlasting peculiar treasure. Thus we see clearly that our Lord has a great purpose in saving us, because He has paid all that He had to save us. Even though we were like filthy rags because of sin, yet our Lord made us His peculiar treasure.

The apostle speaks of the world to come or the New Creation in Hebrews 2:5. That New Creation will show forth God's glory for eternity. In that New Creation there is no more death, neither pain nor tears (Rev. 21:3-5). It will be free from the curse of sin and will last forever. We are told that this New Creation will not be governed by the angels (Heb. 2:5), even though they are mighty angels, always doing God's will and pleasure. But it will be governed by those who are sought and saved by the Lord Jesus Christ. In Psalm 103:20 it says that the angels excel in strength, do His commandments and constantly hear God's voice. They do not rebel or disobey. They are mighty and shining (Luke 24:4), and are many in number (Rev. 5:11) and yet the Scripture says, the coming New Creation filled with God's glory, will not be governed by the angels. In chapter one of Hebrews we have seen that the angels will be made our ministering spirits. Imagine the day when the Lord Jesus Christ will gather all the angels to tell something of the glory in the coming New Creation. When they are told of the glory of the coming Creation they will be filled with wonder. After telling the angels about the glory of the coming New Creation, the Lord will also reveal to them that it will not be governed by them, but by man who is sought and saved by His grace. According to Jude verse 24, one day we shall be presented faultless before God. Then we shall be more glorious than even the angels. The Lord emptied Himself

and purchased us with His precious blood to give us such a high calling and position.

If the Lord had desired, He could have come into the world like an angel. But for a special purpose He became like one of us (Heb. 2:16, 17). For forty days He allowed Satan to bring before Him all temptations which can possibly come to any human being (Luke 4:1, 2). For our sake He conquered all those temptations. So He knows exactly what kind of temptation we are facing. Whenever we have any weakness or temptation, the Lord helps us to overcome. We are being transformed day by day into His likeness by His grace, love and precious blood. And one day we shall see Him, and be like Him and be partakers of His glory and beauty. With that glory, we shall govern the New Creation. Now our earthly trials, temptations and afflictions prepare us for the New Creation. What a high purpose our Lord has in saving us even though we are so foolish! There are some wealthy parents who have high purposes for their children. They want them to occupy high positions in life; but if you ask his small child what he wants to be when he is grown up, he says that he wants to become a policeman! If you ask him the reason, he will say, "I can stop all the traffic." As children they cannot understand their father's great purpose for their lives. We also sometimes cannot understand our Heavenly Father's great purpose for our lives. Many believers live as beggars upon the earth and live a life of defeat and shame, because they cannot understand God's great purpose in saving them. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" What a great loss we incur if we are careless and negligent about our salvation! We have to be watchful, prayerful, diligent and careful.

CHAPTER III

The Greatness of our Calling : God's Partners

In chapter three, we see how we enter into a spiritual partnership with the Lord Jesus Christ by receiving His salvation. Not only our sins are forgiven and we receive a place in heaven, but we also become spiritual partners with Him in all things. This partnership is a unique partnership. In other places in the Bible we are called God's co-workers, and partners (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1). That privilege is not given to the angels, even though they are mighty, shining and many in number. Nowhere in the Scriptures are the angels called God's co-workers and partners. But we believers who are purchased by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ have become His partners, so that we may build for Him, His everlasting habitation. This is a great mystery. God is so great that even the heaven and its fulness cannot contain Him. And yet He wants us, human beings, to build a sanctuary or a dwelling place for Him. With that purpose He brought His people from Egypt to Canaan. He sent ten plagues upon Egypt and Pharaoh and by His mighty hand brought the Israelites out of Egypt. He sent His pillar to go before them, and to lead them. At night they were led by the pillar of fire, and during the day, by the pillar of cloud. The pillar of fire gave light to the Israelites and darkness to the Egyptians. They saw how the Red Sea was divided. He performed many miracles for them. But with all that

he was not living among them.He is a mighty God. He said, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exo. 25:8).

A house is different from a home. A house means a building with furniture but a home is a place where people live. We say, "I am going home." We do not call a hospital or a college, or a workshop or a university a home. A home is where our mother, father, husband or wife and children live. Love makes a home. It is not a building or furniture that makes a home. God is love. His love is everlasting. His love is very great. In Jer. 31:3, He says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." God's love is poured into us. Just as a loving father wants to pour his love on his children, God's love is shed abroad in our hearts. The love of God cannot be poured on the mountains or on the trees, on the sun or on the moon. Similarly, His love is not given to the angels. A servant may be good and faithful. But the love which is shown to the wife and children is not shown towards the servants. However hard you may try, that love which a man has for his wife and children cannot be given to a servant. So God's love is for those who are bought by the Lord Jesus Christ. Angels will be God's ministering spirits for those who are born again. God wants an everlasting dwelling place for Him. The apostle calls us God's dwelling place or God's habitation. We are built up to be God's habitation, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2 : 5).

The Holy Spirit has given different names to the House of God like sanctuary, God's dwelling place,God's temple, and spiritual house. The mystery is, for such an everlasting

habitation, God needs you and me. However weak and foolish we may be. God wants us for such a house. When a wealthy man builds a house, he uses very costly material. When a king builds his palace, he uses the best material gathered from different parts of the world. But the Lord Jesus Christ chooses a filthy rag, an unclean thing and a faded leaf to build God's house. That was our condition when we came to Him. But because we were purchased by Him, we became so precious to Him. And the mystery is that everyone of us however foolish and weak, can become a part of His everlasting habitation.

The house built by Moses was according to the pattern shown by God. That house was only a shadow of the house which is now being built by the Lord Jesus Christ. God kept Moses in the wilderness for forty years and then on the mountain for 40 days to empty him of his own wisdom. There, on the mountain, God gave him the heavenly pattern of the house to be built and also warned him to take heed and build after the pattern which was shown (Exo. 25:40). Every detail of the construction of the Tabernacle was shown to Moses. Neither Moses nor anyone else could change the pattern. The words "as the Lord commanded Moses" are repeated eight times in Exodus chapter 40. In building the Tabernacle, Moses followed every detail given by God. Only then God's glory could fill the Tabernacle. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is building the spiritual house with our partnership. None of us can make any change in that plan. If Moses could not make any alteration in building the material house, how can we make any alteration for the spiritual house? But many of God's servants make some changes, and do God's work with human wisdom. That is

why we see defeat, failure, barrenness and darkness in their midst. We are warned from God's Word to take heed in building His House. These days Christians are divided into many denominations, such as Baptist, Methodist, Mennonite, Anglican and Presbyterian. In the name of a constitution, people have brought in many changes. Also darkness and wrong teaching have crept into the Church.

Similarly, if we want to take any share in the building of God's House, first of all, we must keep ourselves under the Headship, Lordship and Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. To build a large building, the chief engineer will have a plan. Masons and other workers will be under him. Whatever he says they must do. In the same way, when our personal life, family life and the church life are brought under the complete Lordship, Headship, and Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can hear God's voice day by day for our guidance. But if we are defiled by any sin, we become deaf spiritually and cannot hear God's voice. That is why many people are deaf spiritually and their ears are hardened so that they cannot understand what God wants to say. Also they become blind spiritually. They do not know God's plan. Only by keeping ourselves under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in our personal life, family life, and church life, we can know God's will. Then we will become partners in building God's everlasting habitation. At the same time we can enjoy God's fullness in His House. God's love is fully expressed at home. Everyone of us has a Heavenly calling to be true co-workers of the Lord Jesus Christ, to build His everlasting habitation under His Headship. We can take our share in the building of that glorious sanctuary, provided we are willing to come under His Headship and Lordship.

CHAPTER IV

Great Privilege

In chapter four, we see how we can call upon the Lord, because of the great salvation (Heb. 4.16). We have seen that God has a great and high purpose in saving us, that is to make us princes and kings in the coming New Creation. All those who are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus have the privilege (Rev. 5:9, 10). For that purpose, the Lord has made His grace available for all our needs, shortcomings and weaknesses. By coming before His throne of grace we can receive His grace. Whatever may be our trial, temptation, affliction or hardship, His grace is sufficient for us. Our need may be like a great mountain and yet the Lord Jesus Christ Himself invites us to come boldly before His throne of grace with faith. That is why we have to learn more and more about God's grace and how to obtain and enjoy it.

We begin our Christian life only by His grace, and not by any human qualification. God demands everlasting righteousness. There is no comparison between God's righteousness and our righteousness. None of us has the least qualification to receive this great salvation. It is only by God's grace and our faith in the efficacy of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we can obtain this salvation, (Eph. 2:5,8) and show forth God's glory and grace. The apostle Paul testifies in 1 Cor. 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am." That means, whatever he did or suffered for the Lord was only by God's grace. As a God's servant he went

through many afflictions. To teach him the full meaning of His grace, the Lord allowed a painful thorn in his flesh : for the removal of which he besought the Lord thrice. We do not know what that thorn was, but it was a very painful one. God's answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Then he testified later on, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake : for when I am weak, them am I strong." Thus we find that all our afflictions are allowed by God to teach us the meaning of His grace and enable us to enjoy it.

Even the weakest believer in the whole world can become strong by claiming His grace. We need not feel sad or downcast for our weaknesses or shortcomings, because we have bold access to the throne of grace. For our sake the Lord went through every possible temptation and yet was without sin. That is why He is now interceding for us for all our human weaknesses. When I find my strength failing, and my temptation too much for me, and my faith becoming weaker and weaker, and doubts fill my heart, I say, "Lord Jesus Christ, thou art my High Priest, kindly intercede on my behalf and lift me up. Now grant me Thy abundant grace". He gives me boldness, faith and strength.

Please realise your heavenly calling. However weak you may be, the Lord has every provision to bring you to His throne. If you have any doubt, claim the intercessory ministry of the High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe that He faced the same temptations which you are facing. He knows exactly what you are going through and His grace is fully sufficient. May the Lord teach us to claim that grace for our heavenly calling.

CHAPTER V

A Great High Priest

In chapter five, we see our Lord Jesus Christ as the great heavenly High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, with a four-fold ministry. Firstly, He intercedes on our behalf for all our shortcomings. He is our Advocate, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Being a merciful and faithful High Priest, He pleads on our behalf. All of us in our weakness and foolishness, do things to grieve God. Even though we do not want to do wrong, the enemy drags us into temptation. The Lord Jesus Christ knowing our weaknesses and failures pleads on our behalf.

Secondly, in the Old Testament period the high priest had to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. These sacrifices pointed to the Lord Jesus in five ways: Firstly, there was the burnt offering which speaks of the complete sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, the sin offering reminds us how the Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself all our sins to be our Saviour. Thirdly, the peace offering shows how the Lord Jesus Christ has become our peace and has reconciled us to God. Fourthly, the trespass offering reminds us that the Lord Jesus Christ has made full provision for cleansing and forgiveness of our sins which we commit even after we are born again. Fifthly, the meat offering shows that the Lord Jesus Christ has become our meat and drink to

satisfy our hunger and thirst. The Lord Jesus Christ has become all these five offerings on our behalf. By one perfect sacrifice He has made us righteous. We should go on saying by faith, "Lord, you are my burnt offering, you are my peace offering, you are my sin offering, you are my trespass offering, you are my meat offering."

Thirdly, the high priest helped those who wanted to find the will of God. He has on his breastplate two stones called Urim and Thummim. Through these two stones he could find God's will. No one knows how these precious stones operated, but we know that with their help the high priest could find God's will (1 Sam. 23:9-12). The Lord Jesus Chirst is our great heavenly High Priest who lives in us. We can talk to Him directly and find God's will for us.

Fourthly, as our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus gives us heavenly food. Melchizedek appeared to Abraham as the High Priest in Gen. 14:18. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." No one knows from where he came. He was without father and without mother. He was without beginning and without ending. He was made like unto the Son of God. That proves that God Himself took the form of Melchizedek and brought heavenly food for Abraham. This was the prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ how He would offer His body and shed His blood. By eating that heavenly food Abraham got extra strength to over come the temptation brought by the king of Sodom. We need heavenly food by which we get spiritual strength. The Lord has made provision for victory over every temptation which we have to face during childhood, youth and old age. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to

man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). That victory is made possible by receiving the heavenly food from the hand of Melchizedek. Our Bible knowledge and will power cannot help us at the time of temptations. The Lord Jesus Christ is our merciful and faithful High Priest. If we go to Him by faith according to Heb. 2:17, 18 and derive strength through His ministry as the great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, He will give us victory over all the devices of the enemy. Those who depend upon themselves or upon their Bible knowledge, fasting and long prayers will remain spiritually defeated and barren. But those who know how to be benefitted by the High priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ become spiritually strong day by day.

We first know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Then we know Him as our Lord and King. Then we know Him as our great High Priest. May the Lord teach us how to appropriate His High Priestly Ministry in our day to day life.

CHAPTER VI

A Sure Anchor

The apostle speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as the anchor of our salvation in chapter six, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:19). Paul and his fellow passengers had to face a very furious storm in the sea on their way to Rome (Acts 27:28,29). They were in danger of falling upon the hidden rocks. So they cast four anchors out of the stern to keep the ship steady. We too have to face many storms and temptations in our lives. At times the attacks of the enemy are very severe both within and without. In such situations the Lord Jesus Christ is our true anchor. He will never leave us nor forsake us. We have to say by faith, "Lord, you are my anchor." Even in the most difficult situations we have to lay hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our true anchor.

In Heb. 6:14 the Lord says, "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." God used the storm to take Paul to the island of Melita to preach the Gospel there. The people of Melita had not heard the Gospel. Through Paul's preaching many were born again there. They loaded Paul and the other people with all the necessary things when they were leaving for Rome. Thus we see that the storms of our lives are used by God to bring us to greater and multiplied blessings.

Many people are satisfied just with receiving forgiveness of their sins and have the hope of occupying some cor-

ner in heaven. But the Lord's desire is that we should go on to perfection (Heb. 6:1,2). We must not remain babes spiritually but long to go on to perfection. We should not glory in our past experiences however wonderful they may have been. We must believe God's Word fully, and with His strength and wisdom reach upto His standard.

CHAPTER VII

God's Great Desire

In the seventh chapter, we see how the God of perfection has a great desire to bring us into His perfection by the intercessory ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our everlasting and faithful High Priest (Heb. 7:11,25).

All of us try to overcome our trials and temptations in our own strength. Then we realise how weak and feeble we are. To be able to overcome trials and temptations we have to appropriate the intercessory ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. He is our unchangeable, everlasting High Priest. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). That means He is constantly interceding on our behalf knowing our weaknesses, trials and failures. But unless we take His ministry by faith it has no value for us. For example, just by saying that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, we do not receive salvation. When we say by faith that He died on the cross even for me; He took my place; He bore my punishment and my judgment; then His sacrifice becomes effective in our lives. In the same way, we have to believe that He is our everlasting, unchangeable High Priest, Who lives forever to intercede on our behalf. If we appropriate by faith His death, burial and resurrection as our death, burial and resurrection and also His High Priestly ministry, we shall be helped. The very second we are defiled, we call upon and claim His intercessory ministry by faith.

In I John 2:1,2 we read that He is our Advocate, Who is always ready to intercede on our behalf. Also we read in Jer. 50:34, "Their Redeemer is strong : the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall throughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land." The children of Israel were taken captive by their enemies, but God allowed it. Their enemies persecuted them, and would not set them free. But God intervened on their behalf and by His mighty power brought them out of captivity. In the same way, when we fall into some sin or temptation, the enemy refuses to release us. We think by our cleverness and Bible knowledge we can overcome but we fail. We must ask, "Lord, this is my weakness and failure. Kindly intercede on my behalf and deliver me from Satan's hands." By faith we have to claim constantly the high priestly ministry of our Lord on our behalf. The Lord Jesus Christ who lives forever pleads for us and delivers us from our failures. We have to recognise that without Him we can do nothing. We have to depend upon His intercessory ministry till we come to His perfection. For that purpose He gave all that He had, and bought us with His precious blood. In 1 Peter 1: 16 He says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" so, to be brought to His perfection we need His intercessory ministry.

In the old Testament period, thousands of sacrifices were offered by the priests. But no one could obtain perfection through their service or ministry (Heb. 7:19). They were only a shadow of the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 8:5). Melchizedek as a priest of the most high God appeared to Abraham and brought heavenly food for him which strengthened him in the hour of temptation. But he could not help Abraham to come to perfection. By giving His whole body to be broken and having conquered death

on our behalf, the Lord Jesus Christ has now become our heavenly High Priest, through whom we attain perfection (Heb. 7:24,25). By His one perfect sacrifice He makes us perfect through His own perfection. Everytime we fall, we can go to Him with all humility and brokenness. He will lift us up by His high priestly ministry. This does not mean that we can go on sinning, but we need to recognise our human limitation and depend upon His ministry.

May our Lord teach us to appropriate His intercessory ministry and lead us on to perfection.

CHAPTER VIII

A Great Tabernacle

In the eighth chapter, we read about the Lord Jesus as the High Priest of the Heavenly Tabernacle. The earthly tabernacle was pitched by Moses. Now the Heavenly Tabernacle is pitched by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (v. 2). Just as in the Old Testament period, all those who were willing could take a share in the construction of the tabernacle by bringing offering such as gold, shittim wood, brass and iron: now as believers of Lord Jesus Christ each one of us has the privilege to become a part of the Heavenly Tabernacle. The material used for the tabernacle built by Moses was earthly: that is why it did not last long. Now our Lord Himself is building an everlasting tabernacle in which each one of us can take some share. We do not offer a little of what we have, but we offer all. All of us are built together into a sanctuary according to the heavenly plan under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The previous tabernacle was only a shadow of the true Heavenly Tabernacle, as God instructed Moses which we read in Heb. 1:5.

As we have seen earlier God kept Moses on mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights before giving him the pattern of the tabernacle. Before that, he was kept in the wilderness for forty years. During that period he was completely and thoroughly emptied of his own wisdom. Then God gave the pattern and he had to carry out His instructions without any change. Even though the whole pattern

was given by God Himself, yet it was only a shadow. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is building the true tabernacle without hands but with our co-operation. That is why believers are called by different names such as: God's building, God's habitation, God's temple, God's co-workers, God's peculiar treasure, the pearl of a great price, His bride and so on. All these names reveal our heavenly vocation. Here, the Lord is reminding us that our heavenly pattern cannot be changed by anyone.

In order to be fitted into that plan we have to be kept constantly under the Headship and the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the author of the New Testament, by the New Covenant writes divine laws upon our hearts (Heb. 8:8-11). By the old covenant all men were brought under condemnation. They were made to see their absolute corruption. The Lord Jesus Christ as the author of the new covenant conquered all temptations, fulfilled all the commandments and Himself became our righteousness by the power of resurrection. By the same power He writes His laws upon our hearts. Even the weakest believer can follow the Lord through the Holy Spirit. In Galatians chapter five Paul the apostle, uses three expressions for a Spirit filled life : walk in the Spirit (v.16); be led of the Spirit (v. 18): and live in the Spirit (v. 25). When we walk we go step by step, we do not jump. According to Prov. 3:6 in all our ways we must acknowledge His Lordship. That means at every step we have to seek His help. According to Psa. 37:23 our steps are ordered by Him. The Holy Spirit will govern and lead us and thus we can live in the Holy Spirit.

Those who are not born again cannot understand the mysteries in the Word of God inspite of all the Bible knowledge they may have. The moment our sins are forgiven and we are born again, we are made partakers of the divine nature. When we receive the Lord Jesus Christ into our hearts by faith, divine nature is formed in us. If we spend sufficient time upon our knees we will feel divine presence. While we are in His presence, we can pray asking the Lord to prepare us and guide us the whole day and give us His instructions to be followed. We should submit our ways to the Lord and ask Him to lead us to needy people either spiritually or materially and enable us to meet their needs. We can ask the Lord to show us His plan for the whole day, and prepare us for the hour of temptation or trial. For example, if we have to go for an interview or have to face some bad tempered person, we can ask the Lord for extra grace to bear the remarks or criticism without retaliating. Some have very trouble-some mothers-in-law. It is very hard to face them because they purposely try to find some fault with their daughters-in-law. The poor daughter-in-law may bear her humiliating remarks for a few days. Afterwards, she will begin to answer seven words for her mother-in-law's one word. But that attitude will not solve the problem. Ultimately that will lead to an unhappy home.

We can pray to the Lord to overrule every situation, help us not to bring any reproach to His Name and give us grace to bear patiently all the unkind remarks, but not retaliate. In the same way we can claim His grace for any situation in the office or in other places. The Lord being our sympathetic High Priest will help us in our weaknesses in all situations. He will also write upon our hearts His laws and give us right words for every situation.

The Lord Jesus Christ as the Chief Engineer knows the plan of the Heavenly habitation, but He will not show us the entire plan at a time. We have to receive instructions from Him day by day. It is a daily exercise. But many times we fail to seek God's help, wisdom and guidance for our daily tasks and ministry. When we are under God's perfect plan, we can enjoy the true peace of God. That is why when the Temple was being built in the days of Solomon, no tool such as a hammer or an axe was used (1 Kings 6:7). God told David that the Temple was going to be built by his son Solomon. We read in 1 Chron. 28:19 that God gave David, the whole plan in writing.The workers had to follow that plan in every detail. They used very big stones beautifully cut for building the temple. There was no need for any instrument or hammer at the site: they were already cut to the size and shaped beautifully. Thus the work went on quietly. This speaks of peace and quietness. When we are under God's heavenly plan there will be growing heavenly peace in our hearts.

CHAPTER IX

Preparation for a Great Inheritance

In the 9th chapter, we see another aspect of the great salvation. Here we see how we are prepared for our share in the eternal inheritance. Sometimes a wealthy father makes a will to divide his property to his children after his death. It will come into force only after his death. Then the children will receive their share according to the father's will. The Lord Jesus Christ has brought the Old Testament to an end: now He is the Mediator of the New Covenant. We are going to receive our inheritance through Him, depending upon our ability to overcome (Rev. 21:7). Our sins are forgiven freely by the grace of our Lord, but our heavenly inheritance and portion can be obtained only when we overcome. We find many difficulties to overcome. The Lord Jesus Christ becomes our Mediator to teach us to overcome. In the seventh chapter we have seen that He is our Intercessor. By the same intercession He is now preparing us for the heavenly inheritance.

During the Old Testament period people offered many sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins according to their need, but none of those sacrifices could give them a good conscience. The Lord Jesus Christ shows here that we have to claim His precious blood constantly for the cleansing of our guilty conscience, where the stains are caused by sinful thoughts, words and deeds. That gives us boldness into God's presence and prepares us for our share in the eternal inheritance. That blood is now available in the most

Holy place, the Heaven. The very second we are defiled by thought, word or deed we have to claim the precious blood for cleansing. The Lord is in Heaven as our High Priest. When we call upon Him after being cleansed, we are in a better position, for we have a good conscience. If we have guilty conscience we will be afraid to look at Him. When we have a good conscience we will be very glad to look at Him and welcome Him. Through His precious blood He cleanses us and prepares us for His coming and for our heavenly inheritance.

In the tabernacle of the Old Testament there were three parts, - we see in Heb. 9:2-5, first, there was the outer court, where the altar was kept for sacrifices, and laver to wash the feet. Then there was the holy place where the priest ministered. Thirdly, was the Ark of God in the most holy place. In the most holy place behind the veil, and on the Ark was the Mercy Seat. The priest was not allowed to go there. The sunlight shone in the outer court, and divine light in the most holy place. There was no door nor window in the holy place but light was always burning in the golden candlestick which was kept there for that purpose. Only the high priest could go behind the veil once a year with the blood of the sacrifice; no other person could go there. Here, God is saying that only by the efficacy of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can anyone enjoy His Holy presence. We have to be forgiven of all our sins, washed and cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ because ever, sin we commit either by thought, word or deed leaves a mark on our conscience.

Every human being is composed of three things-body, soul and spirit. The body consists of blood, muscles and

bones. Soul consists of intellect, emotions and will power. Spirit also has three parts-namely, conscience or the inward voice or the sense of discernment to know what is good and bad or right and wrong. Secondly, we have a desire to know the unseen. We have curiosity to know our Creator, where He is and how to find Him. Then there is the intuition, a sudden thought to do something. In Gen. 1:26 we read; God made man in His own image. God's glory and beauty could be seen in the first man's face. Because of sin man underwent a threefold downward change. The spirit became dead due to sin, the soul became darkened and the body became defiled. We read in John 4:24 that God is Spirit, and He is living. We can feel Him, talk to Him and know Him, but we cannot see Him with our physical eyes. In our spirits we can talk to Him and feel Him. As long as we live in sin and remain in an unforgiven condition, none of us can feel God's presence or hear His voice because He is a Holy God. God's Word says in Heb. 12:14 that without holiness no one can see God. Also we read in Matt. 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God." We can see God provided we are holy. 1 Pet. 1:16 says our God is Holy. No one can ever have such holiness by themselves. God wants us to have everlasting holiness.

In Matt. 5:48 our Lord said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." None of us by our own effort can have God's perfection and holiness. It is to make us righteous that our Lord rose again. In the Old Testament period, God used the Tabernacle to show His people how they should be holy. For example, the most holy place had divine light. God wants us to be filled with the same divine light. Only in that divine light can we see

our real condition. There are some diseases which cannot be seen and diagnosed by ordinary examination. Some years ago X-rays were discovered. These reveal the condition of the internal organs of the body very clearly. Through X-rays it can be seen whether there is any fracture in the bones. Similarly, when the light of God comes into us it enables us to see ourselves as God sees us, and also helps us to see God's glory and beauty.

In the tabernacle, only the high priest could go behind the veil once a year. Even he could not go without the blood of the sacrifice. He used to wear special garments which were called garments of glory and beauty. We read in Exo. 28:2,4 that first of all there was the white robe; over that he wore the blue robe; at the edge of the blue robe there were golden bells and pomegranates alternately; over the blue robe came the ephod made of five materials: gold, blue, scarlet, purple and fine linen woven very skilfully. Over the ephod the breastplate was worn, with twelve stones on the upper part of it and the Urim and the Thummim underneath. All these garments speak of Divinity. Before the high priest entered into the most holy place, he had to remove these garments of glory and beauty and put on white clothes instead. This means, before he could take the blood of the sacrifice before God on behalf of the people, he had to become an ordinary man. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ never came into the world like an angel. He came as a man (Heb. 2:16). He became like one of us. Had He wished, He could have come like an angel. But as an angel He could not die on our behalf, because angels do not die. That is why angels cannot understand man's sufferings. The Lord Jesus Christ became like us in order to be our merciful and

faithful High Priest. The high priest had to go into the holiest with the blood of the sacrifices on behalf of himself and also on behalf of the people. This happened only once a year on the day of Atonement.

In Lev. 23 we read about the seven feasts of Jehovah which were shadows of coming events. The first feast was the feast of the passover, signifying the death of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb. Secondly, the feast of unleavened bread, when for seven days the Jews had to eat unleavened bread. Leaven is a symbol of sin because a little leaven can leaven the whole lump. In the same way, one sinful thought can defile the whole body. The Lord wants us to become like unleavened bread and He desires to impart divine nature to us. Thirdly, the feast of the first fruits, which speaks of the power of resurrection. Just as one grain of seed when it dies brings forth many grains, the Lord's death has made many righteous. Fourthly, the feast of Pentecost, which signifies that men of all classes are equal. By the Holy Spirit we are baptized into one body. The fifth feast was the feast of blowing trumpets, when the people had to blow the trumpets for seven days. This speaks about the importance of the preaching of the Gospel in the whole world with great power. Sixthly, the day of atonement, showing how people of all classes can become righteous. Seventhly, the feast of tabernacles, revealing to us the truth that the Lord wants us to reign with Him one day.

On the day of atonement, the people would gather from many far off places, but they could not go inside the tabernacle. They had to stay outside. They had to confess all their sins by putting their hands upon the head of the animal of sacrifice. That animal signifies the Lord Jesus Christ.

When it was slain, the high priest removed his garments of beauty and glory and put on ordinary garments and took the blood of the sacrifice behind the veil and sprinkled it on the mercy seat of the ark. Divine fire came down and consumed the blood, indicating that the Holy God had accepted the sacrifice on behalf of the people and had forgiven their sins. Then the high priest came out of the Holy of Holies and declared to the people that he went behind the veil on their behalf to offer the blood and had seen fire coming down from heaven. He declared that God had forgiven their sins. That was the happiest day for the whole nation. But none of these sacrifices could make man perfect, because they were only a shadow. Only the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. By offering Himself, He perfects all those who come to Him.

By merely confessing our sins to the Lord Jesus Christ and repenting of them we are not made righteous. Every sin we commit either by thought, word or deed leaves a mark on our conscience and these marks or stains cannot be removed by our tears of repentance or offerings. Our conscience reminds us constantly of our past sins. When we go through any difficulty our conscience accuses us that God is punishing us for the sins which we committed in the past. Many people being pricked in their conscience weep, fast and give charity. Some go on pilgrimage, thinking that by doing these things the marks on their conscience will go away. Because of their guilty conscience they are troubled and have no peace. Many people are troubled at the time of their death because of their sins and start weeping, plead ing with others to do something to help them get mental relief. No human effort can bring real peace to our con-

science. The stains of our guilty conscience are washed away only by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus, as we read in Heb. 9:12, the Lord Himself entered into the holy place with His blood. According to the prophecy in Psalms 16:10, the body of the Lord Jesus Christ did not see corruption. He is perfectly holy. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Now His blood is there in heaven, and it has everlasting life. From there it is sprinkled into the heart of the repentant sinner. By that blood all our guilty stains are washed away (Heb. 9:14).

Before new birth, our conscience is defiled with sin. Our spirit is dead, our soul is darkened, and our body is defiled. When the Lord Jesus Christ as our Priest sprinkles His blood upon our dead spirits our dead spirits are quickened. We find divine life flowing into our spirits. We begin to feel God's presence. We talk to God as a friend talks with his friend. We feel heavenly peace coming into us.

When our dead spirit is quickened we are given a longing to be as holy as the Lord is holy. We receive an increasing love for God's Word and His people. When our darkened soul is enlightened, we are given divine wisdom to understand the things of God and to know His purposes. Through divine love we can love all people equally. Our defiled body is also cleansed. Now we want to serve God through our members. Our tongue begins to praise God. Our legs refuse to go to wrong places. As long as we are in this body we get defiled because of our old sinful nature. We do not become supernatural when we are born again. The old man or the old sinful nature will be stirred up again and again. By entertaining sins like hatred, enmity, pride, and greed in our hearts, we nurture the sinful nature, and get

defiled. But we can constantly claim the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for cleansing, washing, and purging. As we read in 1 John 2:1, He is our Advocate, Intercessor and High Priest. By His intercession for us and by cleansing through His blood, we are made perfect.

Just as we claim His grace and wisdom for doing His work, we can claim by faith His intercessory ministry. Through this very important ministry, we can overcome all temptations. We are saved from the deception of the world and are thus prepared for His Second Coming. And at His coming we will receive our great inheritance.

CHAPTER X

Great Boldness in God's Presence

In the 10th chapter, we are again reminded how the Old Testament offerings could not make the children of Israel perfect by practices, customs and rituals. Only the Holy sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross makes anyone holy.

Another great blessing of His sacrifice is, boldness to enter into the most holy place because of the efficacy of His precious blood, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near..." (Verses 19-22). By the power of His blood we can go into the holiest anytime, for any need. The more we appropriate His High Priestly ministry, the more we enjoy boldness in His presence. (Verse 21). By His sacrifice, He has broken the middle wall of partition. Whenever we fail to enjoy this boldness, we have to search our hearts, confess our failures and get ourselves cleansed in His precious blood. Then we enjoy the great boldness in His presence again.

CHAPTER XI

Men of Great Faith

Now in the eleventh chapter, we see the ministry of the Lord Jesus as our Heavenly High Priest, more effective through faith. All that has been said in the earlier chapters become clearer through faith. By faith only we can enjoy all the spiritual blessings. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (v. 1). As human beings we are more interested in the things seen than the unseen. When we receive the life of God, unseen things become more real to us than the seen things. Real faith gives us more and more affection for heavenly things, such as the Word of God, the Kingdom of God and our share in it (Col. 3:2-4). "For by it the elders obtained a good report" (v. 2). By faith great men of God, could live a life that was pleasing to Him. Whatever God showed and declared they believed and obeyed. Our faith also becomes strong when we obey implicitly.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (v. 3). According to God's Word, He created everything out of nothing. Those who do not believe in the Bible have many theories about creation. Some say, it took many years to create all things. But God's Word says that by one word of the Lord Jesus all things came into being (Ps. 33:6). If we try to understand it by human wisdom or knowledge or science, we will be all the more confused. Those who have not received the life of

God believe only in man's theories. For them unseen things have no value. But we believe what the Bible says, God took the dust of the earth and created man. Also, without sowing or tilling all the vegetation came into existence (Gen. 1:12). Without the sun and the moon, light came into existence by the word of God. As we read in Genesis chapter 1, "He said and it was so." By faith we understand this and by faith we believe it. Those who do not believe are full of fear and doubt and fail to understand what God has kept for them. In Heb. 11:4 we see Cain and Abel, both had a desire to bring an offering which would please God. God had shown that someone should die on their behalf. Cain began to argue and thought that God would be more satisfied with the fruits of the earth. But God had never demanded that. Abel believed God and gave what He demanded. By that act of obedience, Abel was declared righteous.

Enoch, mentioned in Heb. 11:5 walked with God (Gen. 5:22,24). It means that whenever God called him either during the day or the night he was ready to go to Him. He never questioned Him. He pleased God and not himself. By the same faith he was translated. A mother taught her daughter the story of Enoch. Afterwards someone questioned her- "How did Enoch go to heaven?" The child said with simple faith, "Enoch and God were good friends. Everyday they went for a long walk. One day while walking, God said, 'Enoch, let's go home'. He said, 'Yes Lord, I am ready'. So they both went to heaven." There are some who question as to how such a thing could happen. Whatever God says in His Word, we must accept with simple faith. Phrases like "God said", "And God spake", appear 558 times in the first five books of the Bible and nearly 2000 times in the Old

Testament. That proves that each verse in the Bible is God's Word and not man's Word. After my conversion, these phrases helped me to believe that the Bible is God's Word and they gave me a new love for His Word. One day a man came to me with a doubt and asked me, "Do you believe that from cover to cover the Bible is God's Word?" I replied, "Yes." Again he asked, "Do you believe that Jonah was in the fish's belly for three days?" I said, "I strongly believe. And if the Bible says that the fish was in Jonah's belly, I will believe that also. I may not understand many portions of the Bible but I will never doubt it." God uses small phrases of His Word for salvation of people. By reading the Bible slowly and systematically upon our knees we receive many blessings. As we read we should pray, "Lord, speak to me according to my need." Then by quiet meditation upon the Word, many hidden mysteries will be revealed to us. Some truths of the Bible are revealed to us in sickness, trials, troubles and loneliness. It is God's Word and the Holy Spirit is our best teacher.

Many people doubted the record of the flood in the Bible in Noah's time. But when fossils of sea animals were discovered on many high mountains, they believed that once upon a time these mountains must have been covered with water. When God commanded Noah to build an ark, he immediately believed in the coming judgement and obeyed (Heb. 11:7). He never questioned God. His workers must have mocked him, but he believed God and was made righteous, because of his faith. We too may have to face many mockings for the sake of our faith, but such experiences will only give us stronger faith.

Abraham was a [illegible] and a healthy man in the [illegible] of Ur of the Chaldees. When God spoke to him to leave that city and go to [illegible] straightway he [illegible]. [illegible] he was [illegible] He [illegible] knew [illegible] he obeys [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] Because of his obedience and faith [illegible] have [illegible]

[illegible] God had kept Sarah barren for a long [illegible] whatever may happen to us, it is intended to give us a strong faith. Without such a faith, we will never know the greatness of our salvation (Heb. 11:13-16). God uses all such situations, circumstances, afflictions and trials to draw away our eyes from the perishing things and fix them on heavenly and eternal things. The power of resurrection becomes more real to us as we claim it according to our need (Heb. 11:18). God told Abraham to offer his only son on the altar, to give him a strong faith. He did not doubt God. He believed that even though he slew his son, God was able to raise him up. With that faith, he bound his son and raised his knife to slay him. He knew that his wife did not have that much faith. That is why without consulting her, he went to offer his son on the altar (Gen. 22:3). He

got up early in the morning, took his servants and an ass and went away. He knew that if he had told her, she would not have allowed him to offer Isaac. She would have said "How can you offer our only son? God would never say such [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Thus his faith became strong. [illegible] caught in the thicket, God was showing him that [illegible] bound to him. So to enjoy our salvation fully we need [illegible] faith. Our [illegible] in the [illegible] [illegible] God for our affliction and our tried [illegible] [illegible]

CHAPTER XII

Great Need for Godliness

In the twelfth chapter, verse one, the apostle exhorts us to "Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and .... run with patience the race that is set before us." The sin which easily besets us is unbelief or doubt which makes us spiritually blind. A person who is overweight cannot run a race till he controls his diet and comes to normal weight. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22). The Lord wants us to take our share in the heavenly city which has foundations as we see in Heb. 12:10. We have to be chastened and rebuked by the Lord, to prepare us for that heavenly city, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. 12:6-8).

We must be partakers of God's holiness that we may be able to live in the heavenly city as heavenly kings and possess it forever. We must be constantly chastened by the Lord. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). God's purpose is so great that He wants to make us citizens and kings in that heavenly city, to reign with Him where angels are ordained to minister to us (Heb. 1:13, 14).

In the end days God is going to shake everything (verse 26). All that has been accomplished by our own effort, wisdom, or strength will be removed. Only that which has been accomplished with His strength, for His glory and praise will remain. Constantly we have to examine ourselves and do nothing in our wisdom and strength, but do everything through the Holy Spirit for God's glory. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (v. 28). We are going to be in that kingdom which shall not be shaken.

CHAPTER XIII

Great Promises

In the last chapter, we see another aspect of the great salvation. In verse five, there is a promise for us: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." This promise will be fulfilled in our lives when we live a contended life and not be greedy. We have to keep our hearts free from every kind of covetousness. Then according to verse 6, we will be able to say boldly, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

In verse 13, the apostle exhorts us to "go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." We should be willing to suffer reproach for the Lord's sake by living a life of separation. We should not be defiled by worldly friends and worldly contacts. Then we will be given a glimpse of the heavenly city.

The Lord has made full provision to bring us to perfection by teaching us to do His perfect will. In verses 20 and 21 we see seven proofs of finding God's perfect will. We can divide these verses into seven parts: (1) The God of peace (2) that brought again from the dead (3) our Lord Jesus (4) that great shepherd of the sheep (5) through the blood of the everlasting covenant (6) make you perfect in every good work, to do His will (7) through Jesus Christ to whom be glory for ever and ever. By finding and doing God's perfect will for our lives, we can attain perfection for which we are called. Let us see something about these aspects: (1) Our God is a God of peace. Whenever God speaks concerning any matter there will be increasing,

multiplying, eternal and heavenly peace (Isa. 32: 17). When the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, His first words were "Peace be unto you." He said the same words twice in John 20:19,21. In Mark 4:39 He rebuked the wind and the sea with similar words, "Peace, be still." When the Lord does speak, there will be peace; every storm will be made calm.

2. The words 'Brought again from the dead,' refer to the power of resurrection. We cannot do God's will in our own strength. The apostles experienced the power of resurrection in their ministry (Acts 2:24; 3:26; 4:10,33; 5:30). They could declare very boldly the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. When we are in God's perfect will, we receive His power of resurrection to obey Him.

3. We will be brought under the Lordship of our Lord Jesus by doing His will. We will be kept constantly under His Lordship and Kingship and we will be ready to do His will. We will be governed and controlled by Him as our Lord and King.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd of the sheep. Being our great Shepherd He will lead us to many Scripture portions to confirm His will (Psa. 23:1,2). The Good Shepherd leads us to places where we can be blessed spiritually. When we are in God's will, spiritually we are satisfied. He leads us to green pastures and still waters, and He Himself becomes our satisfaction.

5. We can claim the Lord's precious blood of the everlasting covenant to keep us clean and give us boldness into the most holy place.

6. When we are in the Lord's will, we are made perfect in doing every good work. The sixth proof of being in God's will is that we get a desire to do His will in every small matter. We desire to be governed by the Lord at every step "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD" (Psa.37:23). All our steps will be controlled and governed by the Lord. "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). In all our ways we want to be governed by Him and thus become perfect in every good work to do His will.

7. Finally, by doing God's will His Name must be highly magnified. When we do His will our desire should be to bring glory to our Lord. These are the seven proofs given to us to know the Lord's will.

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). We have the privilege to be under the subjection of those who teach us and guide us. For our safety and protection God has ordained that we should submit to those who shepherd us, lead us and teach us. That requires submission and obedience. By obeying God's servants we will be protected from the attacks of the enemy.

May the Lord open our eyes to see the greatness of our salvation, and enable us to enjoy all its benefits day by day, and lead us to perfection.

—— :o: ——